

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

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FM AMCONSUL CALGARY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2249

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

UNCLAS CALGARY 0152

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAGR, CA

SUBJ: WHELAN CALLS FOR AGRICULTURAL OPEC

REF: CALGARY 0142

FOR AGRICULTURE/FAS

1. ON MARCH 12, FEDERAL AGRICULTURE MINISTER WHELAN TOLD NORTH AMERICAN AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT (NAAM) RALLY IN CALGARY THAT HE SUPPORTED AN "AGRICULTURAL TRADE AGREEMENT" AMONG MAJOR FOOD EXPORTERS SIMILAR TO OPEC AGREEMENT. WHILE DISCLAIMING THAT HE DESIRED A "CARTEL", WHELAN BACKED A PRODUCERS ORGANIZATION FOR DEALING WITH WORLD FOOD SUPPLIES. WHELAN SAID "THE FOOD PRODUCING NATIONS HAVE TO STOP POUNDING ONE ANOTHER ON THE HEAD BY TAKING AWAY EACH OTHERS MARKETS AND UNDERSELLING EACH OTHER", AND SUGGESTED THAT "THERE ARE COUNTRIES, SUCH AS OPEC COUNTRIES, WHICH CAN AFFORD TO PAY PRICES FOR FOOD WHICH GIVE US A REASONABLE RATE OF RETURN FOR OUR PRODUCERS".

2. COMMENT: WHELAN WAS PRESENT AT NORTH AMERICAN AGRICULTURE MEETING AS AN OBSERVER BUT HIS CALL FOR FOOD PRODUCERS
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ORGANIZATION TO CONTROL PRICES SPARKED A STANDING OVATION FROM AUDIENCE GATHERED FROM PRAIRIE PROVINCES AND COLORADO, KANSAS, MARYLAND, NEW MEXICO, AND WYOMING. QUESTIONED BY PRESS, WHELAN ADMITTED THAT HIS AGRICULTURAL TRADE AGREEMENT PROPOSAL HAD ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED WITH U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE BERGLAND AND ARGENTINIAN AGRICULTURE MINISTER WHO WERE "NOT THAT RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA". WHELAN ALSO

CONCEDED THAT ITC MINISTER HORNER (WHO ALSO SAT IN AS AN
OBSERVER AT NAAM RALLY) HAD HIS RESERVATIONS. AMERICAN
AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT (AAM) DELEGATE FROM NEW MEXICO (DON
THIGPEN) PRAISED WHELAN PLAN AS "... MOST STATESMANLIKE
PROPOSAL I'VE SEEN", WHILE OTHER AAM DELEGATES EXPRESSED
THEIR SUPPORT FOR CANADIAN AGRICULTURE MOVEMENT'S RECENT
STRIKE IN SASKATCHEWAN AND MANITOBA. THE NAAM MEETING WAS
ONE OF MANY EVENTS AT "ROUND-UP - 78", A MAJOR ANNUAL
ALBERTA AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITION.
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